

THE LINK

Published by Americans for Middle East Understanding

Room 771, 475 Riverside Drive, N.Y., N.Y. 10027

Volume 11, No. 5

Winter 1978

The Sorrow of Lebanon

By Youssef M. Ibrahim

A black Mercedes made its way among the rubble of Beirut. Torn by wounds and strapped to the car, the body of a man, with only shreds of clothing remaining, lay across the hood like a raw slab of meat. He was a Syrian soldier who came here to keep the peace. Now he was going home.

On another street a young militia fighter, machine gun in hand, watched the body of a little girl being lifted out of a taxi that had been heading for safety when it was hit by a volley of bazooka fire. The child's left lower leg dangled from a thin strip of skin. Hastily, an ambulanceman covered the corpse with a blanket, then pulled five other bodies of children from the wreckage. Seven others died in a taxi, riddled with shrapnel and bullet holes, that stood forty yards away in a pool of blood.

It was just another day in the bloody conflict that has turned Lebanon—once the most charming landscape of the Middle East—into a killing ground. Such violence and atrocities have tormented Lebanon since the civil war began in 1975. Regrettably, in the early days of October, another of a score of ceasefires broke down, giving way to the most savage fighting to date.

Once again, the sad images of Beirut, its people brutalized, its buildings reduced to empty hulks, reappeared on television screens around the world.

Youssef M. Ibrahim, a business reporter for the New York Times, prepared The Arab World: A New Economic Order, which appeared in the fall issue of the Link.

The city, reporters said, was without power or water and was running low on food and medicine. Only ammunition for the guns and the hate were abundant.

In a more recent episode, the Syrian "peace keeping" force was fighting the Christian, right-wing militia at Ashrafiya, the Christian section of Beirut. Before that the Syrians had engaged Moslem and Palestinian national forces. And, in between, the Israelis,

invading the southern part of Lebanon, were battling the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Lebanon has become an international battleground. A sinister smell of conspiracy has enveloped the country, and hardly anyone is innocent of the crime. Millions of dollars, dinars, rubles, francs and pounds are fueling the slaughter.

It is hard to say how many people have paid the price. At least 200,000

Fighting in southern Lebanon has swept more than 200,000 people from their homes.



All photos courtesy of Save the Children

have died. More than a million and a half people have lost their homes and property since the war began, and 500,000 Lebanese have left the country. In a nation of about 3 million people, all of that spells disaster.

Lebanon's major economic asset was its stability. It stood as an oasis of peace and quiet in the midst of constant turmoil in the Middle East. Over the years, it attracted investors and international banks, companies and corporations because of its amazing services, its pleasant weather and its ideal location. That Lebanon is no more. In fact, the future holds the prospect of more fighting and hardship for the beleaguered people of Lebanon. Exactly how did this come about?

Countdown to War

The seeds of turmoil in Lebanon were sown in 1943 when the nation gained its independence from France. In principle, the country claimed a democratic system of government. In practice, seats in Parliament were divided along lines of religious affiliations, as were the various government posts, using a six-to-five formula that favored the Christian Lebanese. Based on a 1932 census—the first and last in the nation's history—the formula showed a larger proportion of Christians than Moslems.

Accordingly, key government posts went to Maronite Christians, the largest Christian sect in Lebanon. The system further dictated that the President of the Republic and the commander of the army be Maronites. The Sunni Moslems, as the orthodox denomination of Islam and largest Moslem community, received the prime ministership, while the second largest Moslem sect, the Shiites, were given the speakership of Parliament.

But things had changed over the years. The Moslem population had grown since the 1932 census was taken and Moslems believed they were the dominant segment of the Lebanese population since the late fifties. Since 1948, the Middle East conflict has sent Palestinian refugees streaming into Lebanon. Of the estimated 400,000 Palestinians who settled there—in refugee camps as well as high rises—the majority were Moslems.

Yet, the tension in Lebanon has never been between Christians and Moslems as such. Deeper social and

About This Issue

The word from the angel to Mary was all joy: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son..." But to Joseph, in a dream we'd call a nightmare, the word was otherwise: "Rise, take the child and his mother and flee..."

In recent weeks the word from Cairo, Tel-Aviv and Washington has been one of impending peace between two Middle East enemies. Yet, even amid that promise of reconciliation, there remain people in the Middle East who still wake up to nightmares.

This issue of the *Link* focuses on two such groups: the uprooted people of Lebanon and the Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails. They are the sorrow amid our joy, the "linkage" part of the Camp David framework.

Mr. Youssef Ibrahim of the *New York Times* contributed the article on relief agencies presently at work in Lebanon. For those who wish to contribute to these efforts, names and addresses of the agencies have been included.

Sami Esmail, a 24-year-old Palestinian-American, spent ten months in an Israeli prison, prior to his release on October 18, 1978. On November 3, the director of AMEU conducted an exclusive telephone interview with Sami, in a New York-East Lansing, Michigan hook-up. Those wishing extra copies of the interview, as it appears in this issue, may write to the *Link*, in care of the New York office.

This issue, in addition, carries the first major review of the National Lawyers Guild 1977 Middle East Delegation Report on *Treatment of Palestinians in Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza*. Reviewer L. Humphrey Walz is a former editor of the *Link*, a member of AMEU's Board of Directors, and has long been concerned about the treatment of Palestinians. On October 11, 1977, Rev. Walz was invited to testify before the 216th Session of the U.N. General Assembly's "Special Commit-

tee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories."

The *Link* would also like to bring to the attention of its readers the following news items.

Middle East Scholarship Program at Bryn Mawr

Bryn Mawr College has begun a scholarship program to bring qualified women undergraduates from the Arab world to study on its Pennsylvania campus. The purpose of this program is to provide financial aid to outstanding but poor Arab women, while, at the same time, to increase knowledge and understanding of the Middle East among American students. *Link* readers who would like to support the presence of Arab students at Bryn Mawr may mail their contributions to: International Program, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pa. 19010. Checks should be made out to: Middle East Scholarship Fund.

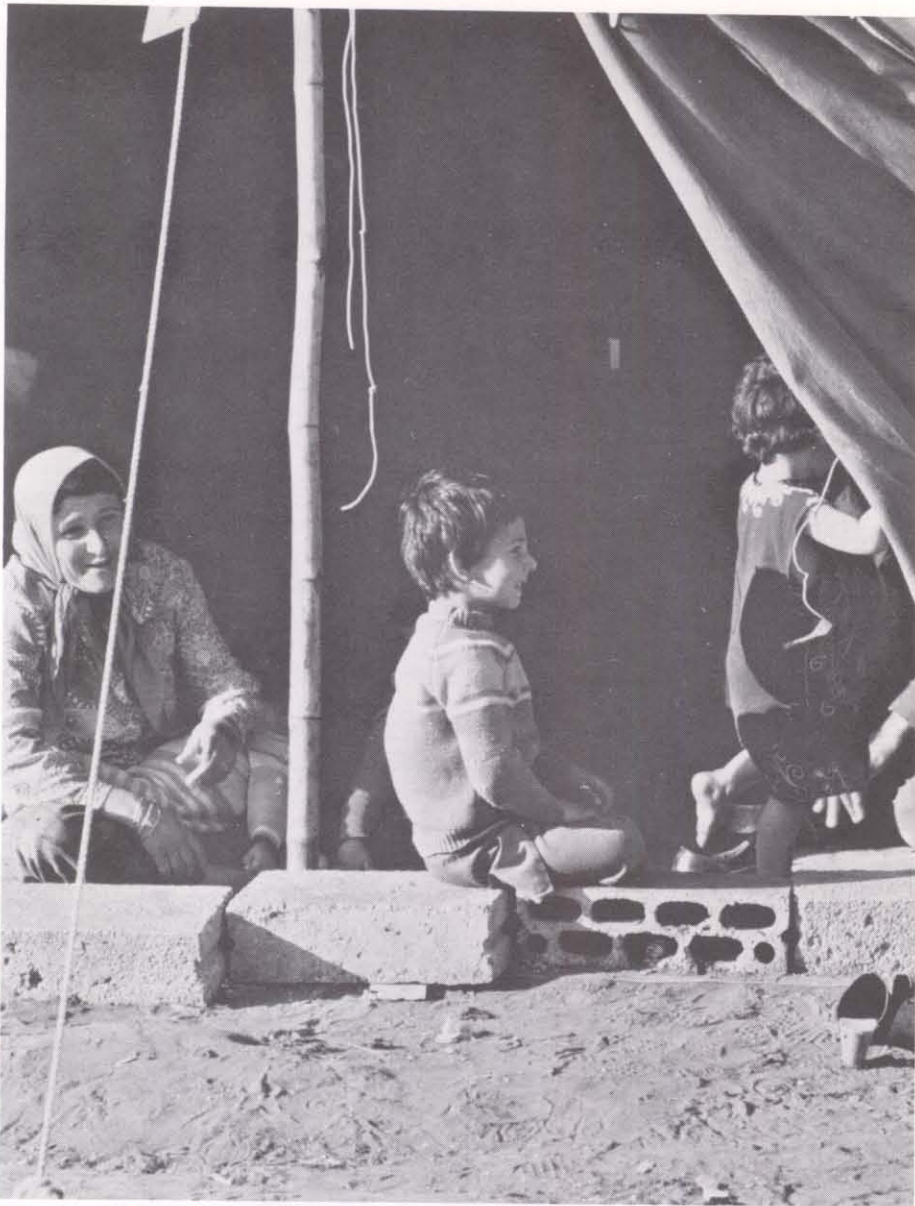
Gift Books for Libraries

This unique AMEU program enables you, for \$42.00, to contribute to the library of your choice a selection of significant books on the Middle East, list-priced at around \$90.00.

Please send us, along with your check for \$42.00, the name of the school or public library you have chosen. We will then send the set of books (usually twelve to sixteen in number) to that library, together with a card announcing that the gift is being sent in your name. Be sure to include the name and address of the library you select.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of AMEU, I would like to wish all of our readers a most joyous and prosperous holiday season.

John F. Mahoney, *Executive Director*



Renewed combat compounds the problem of housing war victims.

economic inequities have also been at work, priming the fire of civil disorder. The Moslems felt closer to the Palestinians: the Moslems were without equality in Lebanon, and the Palestinians were without a land. Thus, it became an alliance of the have-nots against those who appeared to have it all: the Christians and their rich Moslem allies, who together controlled commerce, trade and wealth in Lebanon. For years, tension between these groups simmered and was exacerbated by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although Lebanon officially stayed out of the 1948, 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, it was never isolated from them. Each conflict swelled the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In 1948, some 130,000 came into Lebanon from northern Palestine. Many more arrived in 1967, and in 1970, when Jor-

danian armies battled with Palestinians and succeeded in expelling virtually all armed Palestinians who were using Jordan as a base of operation against Israel.

The arrival of the armed Palestinians served as the catalyst that turned the strained coexistence of the various religious-political groups into violence. The Palestinians, under the rubric of the PLO, acted as free agents within the country and used southern Lebanon as a staging ground for attacks against Israel. This gave the rightists the platform they needed to demand the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon. But the Moslem-leftist coalition saw the Palestinians as their allies, and also sympathized with their plight. The hard lines of conflict were forming, fueled by years of unresolved injustices perceived by the Moslems, and fed by the Chris-

tians' fears of being overwhelmed by a swelling sea of Moslems.

Throughout 1973, fierce battles were fought between the Palestinian fedayeen and the Lebanese army, but Lebanon's President, Sulaiman Franjeh, fearing a mutiny by Moslem soldiers in his army, refrained from ordering a general assault. The result was further frustration and each camp began to arm itself to the teeth.

Palestinian refugee camps brimmed with weapons and ammunition. The more nationalistic of Christians, prejudging the army's ineffectiveness, imported their own arms to do the job themselves. Alarmed by this show of strength, Lebanese Moslem groups turned to the Palestinians for arms and support.

So in the spring of 1975, when the first bullets were fired, the entire Lebanese theater went up in flames. Bout after bout, battle after battle resolved nothing. But the hate and bitterness became deeper.

Other parties started to step into the conflict. Shifts in alliances and friendships became the trademark of the Lebanese civil war. During the early stages, the Christian alliance with the rightists was supported by the more conservative Arab regimes, including Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, while the leftist Palestinian-Moslem coalition had the support of Libya, Iraq and Algeria. Money and weapons poured into Lebanon to support opposing sides.

At first, Syria was supportive of the PLO and its leftist allies. But when it appeared that the leftist coalition would crush the Christian alliance, the Syrians worried. A Palestinian control over Lebanon would invite Israeli invasion and would therefore threaten Syrian defenses by making Syria vulnerable on its Lebanese border to Israeli attack.

So in January 1976, Syria stepped in, sending its troops to relieve the besieged Christians. And, Lebanon sank even deeper into the swamp of Arab rivalries.

The Syrian presence was legitimized in October during an Arab summit meeting that led to the formation of an Arab Deterrent Force, dominated by the Syrian troops already in Lebanon, with additional forces from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the two Yemens. As many as 45,000 armed men were there to keep the peace.

Clearly, Lebanon had lost control of its destiny. Order had broken down in the country. The Lebanese army faded away, as officers and soldiers joined

their respective allies.

In September 1976, a new Lebanese President took over. Elias Sarkis, a centrist Christian, had little to work with. He had no army, no police, no political allies with any weight, and Lebanon was breaking down. Some forty-three private armies roamed the country, and the Syrian-dominated Deterrent Force was shifting its alliances again, this time gearing up to do battle with the Christians.

The Christians reached out for Israeli support, and Israel was only too anxious to extend it. Arms and ammunition poured in from yet another source and the war flames burned higher.

Eventually, the concentration of Palestinian fighters in southern Lebanon became Israel's bone of contention. Using the excuse of a Palestinian attack on a civilian bus in Israel—an attack engineered by Palestinians who departed from northern Lebanon and sailed to Israel in a boat—the Israelis invaded Lebanon. When they finally pulled out on June 13, 1978, the south had been destroyed. The Christian militia, now close allies of Israel, took over after the Israelis left.

And so the killing goes on, the victims continue to fall. The children of Lebanon now play with guns and are unmoved at the sight of rubble, corpses, the destruction. But the savagery they are witnessing has altered their lives immeasurably, and, if it continues, will profoundly alter their future.

No End in Sight

In a recent address delivered in New York, Gabriel Habib, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, observed that "the dynamics of war and peace in Lebanon are closely tied to the dynamics of peace or war in the area." He told his audience that no peace will come to Lebanon until the Middle East crisis has been settled.

The various groups in Lebanon, he said, have become pawns in the hands of other forces, "instruments in the international game which has plagued Lebanon ... and that's the real tragedy."

Perhaps the only sign of hope, of continued caring, is the aid that relief organizations offer in the form of food, medicine, blankets and clothing. It is precisely the humanitarian action the world must take to prevent Lebanon from literally withering away.

A Pipeline of Hope

Throughout the three years of fighting, a remarkable effort has been underway to help the Lebanese people cope with the devastation of war. Voluntary organizations have pipelined medical supplies, food and financial assistance to hundreds of thousands of Lebanese who have been victimized by the war. Carried out under the most difficult of circumstances, the relief work has brought comfort and hope to Lebanese of all religious affiliations, without regard to political alliances or partisan politics.

Much of the assistance originated in the United States. The U.S. Government has channeled aid through other governmental organizations under the auspices of the State Department. One such group is the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, which has disbursed about \$20 million to various Lebanese communities.

Since 1975, the United States Agency for International Development (AID) has poured more than \$100 million into Lebanon—some of it in the form of direct aid and some transmitted through organizations well established in Lebanon. About \$40 million of this amount went to Lebanese banks and associations to help with the reconstruction of homes and businesses. Another \$20 million took the form of food supplies, health care, agricultural supplies and other hygienic products, under AID's PL-480 program.

AID funds have also reached international organizations and American groups with logistical presence in Lebanon and a working knowledge of where and to whom the money should go. Among these groups are: the International Committee for the Red Cross, which received \$7 million and directed the effort through its Geneva head-

Emergency feeding programs in Beirut now care for displaced children.





Many self-help projects use cash incentives to encourage improvement in community and health services.

quarters; the United Nations Trust Fund for Lebanon, a special fund set up in late 1976; the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, a permanent UN group that received \$2.5 million earmarked for Lebanon; and UNICEF, the recipient of \$5.5 million for its Lebanon aid program.

American organizations tapped to backstop AID efforts in Lebanon are: Save the Children, which received \$1.2 million for its Lebanese rehabilitation program; Catholic Relief Services, the recipient of \$3.5 million for ongoing programs of rehabilitation in Lebanon; and the Armenian General Benevolent Union, which received an allocation of \$500,000 for its effort on behalf of the Lebanese Armenian community.

In October 1975, when the AID program in Lebanon began to emerge as a major effort, a great deal of assistance was directed to the American University of Beirut, whose hospital became the major source of medical help to the countless victims of the fighting. Slowly, however, the AID program expanded into other forms of support.

Among the groups also receiving assistance in their effort to help Lebanon were the YMCA and YWCA, each of which received AID funds reaching \$200,000 and \$800,000 respectively.

Virtually all of the AID disbursements were responses to specific proposals. AID officials say they will continue to welcome concrete suggestions and blueprints for projects in Lebanon from various aid groups. (AID contacts are listed in another section, in addition to names and addresses of other groups active in the aid and relief effort in Lebanon.)

Donor Organizations

A brief look at a number of donor organizations now follows. There are many groups doing remarkable work in Lebanon today. All groups listed are mentioned by way of example and are not to be considered a comprehensive record of the aid effort.

American Council of Voluntary Agencies

The Council acts as a clearinghouse for all relief efforts. Although not the source of any funding for relief programs, the Council is an excellent center of information and contacts for individuals and groups seeking advice on how and where to help. The Coun-

cil, through its Middle East desk, offers the full range of aid efforts underway.

American Friends Service Committee

Though involved in relief work for more than thirty years, the American Friends Service Committee has not yet become significantly involved in the relief effort in Lebanon. However, it has made a donation of \$3,000 to the Middle East Council of Churches, based in Lebanon.

American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)

Among the most active organizations aiding Lebanon is ANERA, a Washington-based group. Over the last twelve months, ANERA has disbursed \$80,000, and is now trying to raise another \$50,000 in food supplies to go to Lebanese families.

"We rely heavily on donations from pharmaceutical firms, and try to arrange free transport through the Airline Pilots Associations," explained Peter Gubser, President of ANERA.

He said that ANERA, among other things, has supplied a substantial amount of milk powder to the American University of Beirut to feed babies,



Increased fighting continues to etch desolation into the streets of Beirut.

and has distributed the rest of the shipment to Christian and Moslem needy families.

Arab-American University Graduates Association

Established in 1967, this association is made up to 2200 Arab-American professionals, largely engaged in teaching on American campuses. Immediately after the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in March of this year, the AAUG asked its members to contribute to a fund for relief work. This effort netted \$12,000, directed then through the Lebanese and Palestinian aid organizations.

AAUG also sent a fact-finding mission to Lebanon, according to President Fouad Moughrabi, and organized a tour of the south for some American journalists.

The Armenian Apostolic Church of America

This New York-based group has been very active in dispatching aid to the Armenian community in Lebanon. Two years ago, through a general appeal, it collected \$200,000 from Armenian Americans, while another appeal, in late 1976, produced \$500,000. Much of the help has been disbursed with the help of the Red Cross in Lebanon, the

Minishian Foundation affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, and community groups in Lebanon.

Armenian General Benevolent Union

This agency claims a thirty-year history of varied programs in Lebanon. Earlier in 1978, the Union received the fore-mentioned \$500,000 grant from AID to help the needy among the Armenian community in Lebanon and to continue a program of subsidies and assistance to small businesses there, particularly in the Bourg Hamoud area, where much of the Armenian community resides.

Catholic Near East Welfare Association

The Catholic Near East Welfare Association, in Lebanon since 1948, is a veteran organization in the effort to help the people of Lebanon during good as well as bad times. After stepping up its aid to Lebanon after the civil war broke out, the association now meets the schooling and welfare needs of 1500 children on a monthly basis.

"Over the last four to five months we have spent about \$75,000 on vital supplies to the needy," said Monseigneur Edward C. Foster, a resident of Beirut who recently visited the U.S. He indicated that an additional authorized

expenditure of \$10,000 to assist the displaced will broaden the association's ongoing aid program. Much of the money is used to buy and distribute food and clothing, to find housing for refugees and to supply cash for those who need it.

Catholic Relief Services

Founded thirty-five years ago, with relief and aid programs in eighty-six countries, Catholic Relief Services is the official overseas relief development agency of the American Catholic Church. Since 1976—when its relief effort in Lebanon began—the organization has brought \$4 million in aid to the Lebanese victims of the civil war. In 1977 the group transported and distributed 11,000 tons of food stuffs to more than 600,000 people in Lebanon and increased that to 31,000 tons in 1978.

The organization has received a grant of \$3.5 million from AID for Lebanon and has twenty-one projects for an additional funding of \$1 million under study.

Church World Services

The Church World Services, which directs the aid to Lebanon effort in coordination with the World Council of Churches, and with the cooperation of the Middle East Council of Churches of Lebanon, has been instrumental in routing funds and aid to Lebanese civilians of all religious denominations. The amount of marshalled support has increased dramatically from \$7,000 in 1975 to \$119,000 in 1976 and as much as \$308,000 in 1977. Through September of 1978, it has disbursed almost \$225,000 to Lebanese victims.

Lutheran World Relief, Inc.

Handling overseas assistance efforts on behalf of Lutheran Americans since World War II, the Lutheran World Relief has had an assistance program in Lebanon since the fifties. The organization has intensified its efforts in Lebanon since 1976, channeling about \$500,000 to that country's civilian population and civil war victims.

According to Reverend Gene Thiemann, \$347,000 in clothing and other goods reached Lebanon (and Beirut, through the Middle East Lutheran Ministry) during 1978. In the last twelve months, another emergency fund of \$10,000 and a grant of \$14,000, also established through the Middle East Lutheran Ministry, primarily benefitted a sewing and knitting self-

help center in Lebanon as well as ten communities throughout the country.

The Mennonite Central Committee

In operation since 1920, its aid and relief programs at work in more than forty countries, the Committee started a program of relief assistance in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon last March. The thrust of the program is to give assistance to farmers and a plan is now underway to expand the benefits of this effort in the south. Several Lebanese citizens act as Committee agents in Lebanon.

UNICEF

This organization has earmarked \$23 million for aid to Lebanon since 1975. Half of that has already been disbursed.

"A lot of work is going on right now in Lebanon, although it's hard to believe it in the midst of all the shooting," explained Anthony Hewett, of UNICEF. Some of the organization's money—\$6.5 million—designated for use in Lebanon came from the U.S. The rest comes from donors all over the world.

"Neither we nor any of the other groups helping in Lebanon could do a thing without the courage and the guts of the people there who want to help their country," another UNICEF official said in an interview.

On many occasions, he noted, blankets and medical supplies meant for civilians were in danger of being high-jacked. "One such incident occurred in late 1976, when one of our convoys carrying blankets was stopped by militia men. Nadia Twattel, the woman directing the convoy to a small village, stood her ground, insisting no one could take the blankets away. They were meant, she pleaded, for the destitute people of Bourg Al Baghna. She stood her ground at great risk to her own life, and got the convoy through, safely."

Stories like this one abound. Through a combination of determination, compassion and dedication to Lebanon, countless Lebanese have kept essential aid from international agencies flowing throughout the country.

UNICEF has focused its attention on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of small villages devastated by the war. In conjunction with Lebanese Government officials in non-political posts, such as water and municipal work, UNICEF ex-

perts are getting some of the Lebanese infrastructure to work again, insuring that water is available to farmers, that schools are repaired and teachers assigned to them and that small farmers can resume working their fields. UNICEF's latest accomplishment, in October, was the reactivation of the Tyre water-pumping station.

UNRWA

The United Nations Work and Relief Agency for Palestinian Refugees has continued to look after Palestinians displaced from their homes ever since Israel emerged into statehood in 1948. Although no additional relief programs have evolved, since the civil war began, the costs of ongoing UNRWA care programs have increased sharply, due to the destruction of a number of Palestinian refugee camps by Israeli raids or by combatants in the civil war.

U.S. OMEN

The United States Organization for Medical and Educational Aid, established in 1960, has U.S. four chapters on the West Coast, with headquarters in San Francisco. U.S. OMEN has actively aided Palestinian and, of late, Lebanese civilians.

Violence and destruction have become a part of everyday living for Lebanon's young people.



Ramzi Asfour, San Francisco chapter president, said that from June 1977 to June 1978 the organization sent \$86,000 to civilian victims in Lebanon. Much of the aid, he said, took the form of medicine and medical supplies to the Red Cross of Lebanon and the Red Crescent Society, while other aid went to the Mokased School in Seidon.

Save the Children

Save the Children (SC) has had a program of aid in Lebanon since the fifties. Its service work has significantly increased since civil war broke out. Today it is active in three kinds of programs: health and nutrition; agriculture; infrastructure and social services.

SC directs three emergency programs in devastated East Beirut to help those

wounded or injured in the October fighting. Throughout the entire war, SC emergency and hospital centers across Lebanon have escaped the shelling and destruction and continued to function. The community help program has suffered a bit, SC officials report, because their people have at times been unable to travel from one part of Lebanon to another. "Communications also break down sometimes, but we manage to keep the bulk of our effort going," said Philip Davies, an official of SC's Lebanese aid program.

SC is also carrying out a rehabilitation program for seven villages in the Upper Baalbeck area and a major aid program in Hay el-Sulm, an urban slum.

Some of the funding has come from: the U.S. AID, the United Nations High

Commission for Refugees program; and the Save the Children organizations of Europe, which donated \$190,000, of which \$110,000 came from Norway alone.

In the meantime, SC officials are working on a blueprint for South Lebanon, a detailed program for expanding SC aid there.

Others

This is by no means a comprehensive survey of organizations hard at work in Lebanon. There are many others not included in this appraisal. What now follows is a list of organization names and addresses that should serve as a source of information or as an accurate guide for those who wish to make contributions.

American Council of Voluntary Agencies
200 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10016
(212) 777-8210

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102
(215) 241-7000

American Near East Refugees
900 Woodward Building
733 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-2558

Arab-American University Graduates Association
P.O. Box 7391
North End State
Detroit, Mich. 48202
(313) 872-5582

The Armenian Apostolic Church of America
138 East 39th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016
(212) 689-7810

Armenian General Benevolent Union
628 Second Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016
(212) 684-7530

Catholic Near East Welfare Association
1011 First Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 826-1480

Catholic Relief Services
1011 First Avenue
14th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 838-4700

Church World Services
475 Riverside Drive
Room 678
New York, N.Y. 10027
(212) 870-2061

Lebanon Task Force
Blane Richardson
State Department
Washington, D.C.
(202) 632-8976

Lutheran World Relief, Inc.
360 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010
(212) 532-6350

Mennonite Central Committee
21 South 12th Street
Akron, Pa. 17501
(717) 859-1151

Near East Foundation
54 East 64th Street
New York, N.Y. 10021
(212) 870-2053

Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
Christian Holmes
Washington, D.C.
(202) 632-5916

Red Cross
Chapters throughout
the U.S. and world

Save the Children
Department P
48 Wilton Road
Westport, Conn. 06880
(203) 226-7272

Save the Children
345 East 46th Street
10th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017
(212) 584-4335

UNICEF (United Nations)
866 UN Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017
(212) 754-7868

U.S. Agency for International Development
William Nance
Washington, D.C.
(202) 632-3814

U.S. OMEN
P.O. Box 16308
San Francisco, Calif. 94116
(415) 665-0830

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)
Chapters throughout
the U.S. and world

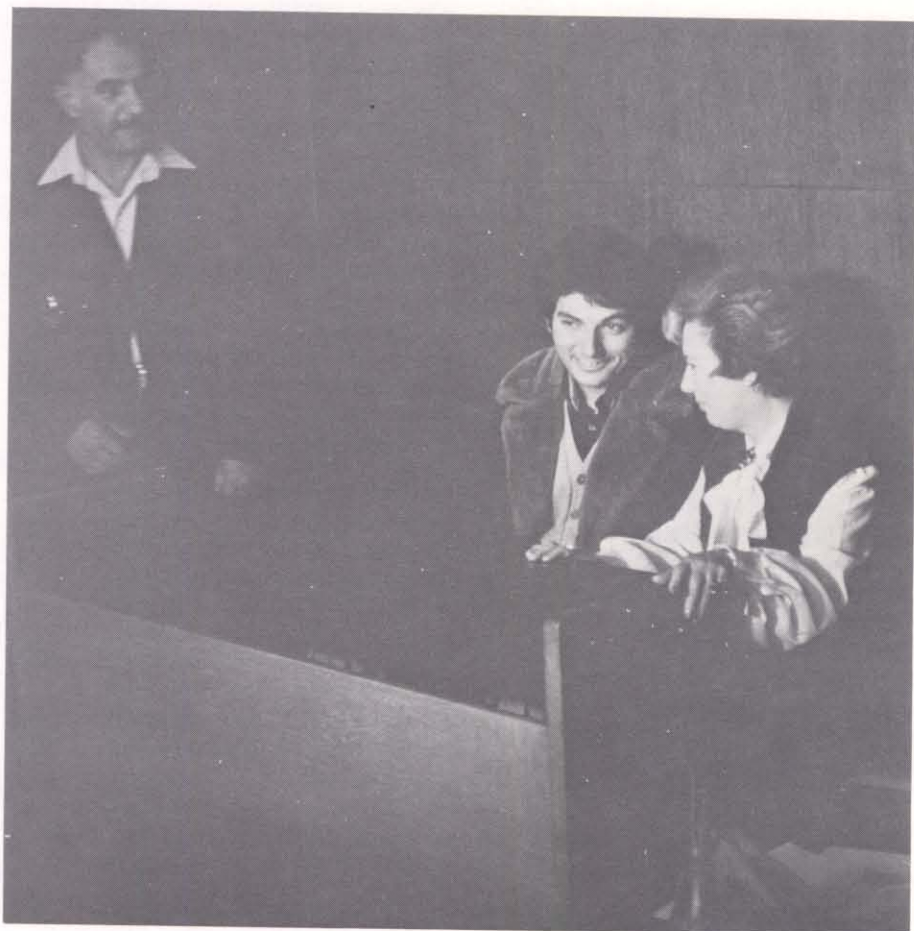
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)
Chapters throughout
U.S. and world

Link Interviews Sami Esmail

Sami Esmail, a U.S. citizen, was born in Brooklyn 24 years ago of Palestinian parents. His mother was one of the very few Arabs who survived the massacre at Deir Yassin early in 1948. His parents retired from the dry goods business in Brooklyn and moved to Ramallah, on the West Bank. In December of 1977, Sami was called to the bedside of his dying father. On December 21, while leaving the plane at Ben Gurion Airport, he was arrested by the Israeli police. On June 12, 1978, he was sentenced to fifteen months in prison. Sami was released from an Israeli prison on October 18, 1978, and is now living in East Lansing, Michigan. The following interview was taped on November 3, and has been edited, due to space limitations. Bracketed items indicate editorial comments or explanations.

Q: What were the circumstances of your arrest at Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport?

A: I was going to Israel for the sole purpose of visiting my dying father. When I arrived at Ben Gurion Airport, I was just picked off the plane, put in an army truck, and taken to an explosives detonation place to see if I had any explosives. I was interrogated at the airport by the Shin Beth people until about maybe 1 a.m. by two members of the Shin Beth. They wanted me to say, by force, that I was a member of a Palestinian organization and had gone to Libya for two and a half or three weeks in August for military training. I told them that was absolute nonsense. I did go to Libya mainly to check out educational, employment and cultural opportunities that exist in Libya, and that was part of the program by the Arab Socialist Party in Libya to attract Arab-American scholars to Libya. They said they were going to use me as an example to other Arab-Americans as well as non Arab-Americans who would speak out for the Palestinians, and that they were going to force me to say that I was militarily trained in Libya, and that I was contributing



Sami and defense attorney Felicia Langer in Israeli courtroom *Sami Esmail Defense Committee*

money in the States to Palestinian organizations, and selling magazines for Palestinian organizations.

Q: How were you treated during your first six days of interrogation?

A: I told them I thought they had a democracy here. They laughed at it and said there's no democracy here: it's for foreign consumption; and we're going to start proving it to you. Right at the airport they undressed me completely. They would make sexual jokes. They would start spitting at me. They handcuffed me, and drove me to Baedaktic Police Station. We arrived at Baedaktic at 1:30 a.m. From that time I declared a hunger strike that lasted all the way to

Tuesday morning, some five and a half days later.

They put me in a room that was 7 by 4 feet. A crude room. No water. No toilet. A hole in the ceiling. Two blankets. And they started a systematic interrogation of me. Seven different people participated. One would come in, and one would go out. And they did not leave me alone at all until Thursday afternoon, when I literally collapsed on the floor, due to a lack of sleep. And at that point, they left me alone for, I think, two hours. And they continued all the way like this until early Tuesday morning, when they never left me alone for a maximum of more than two hours. And it wasn't always two hours. Sometimes they would leave me for ten

minutes, and sometimes it would be a half hour.

They physically mistreated me. I was dressed and undressed many times. I was punched. I was karate slapped. My hair was pulled. I was made to hold chairs over my head while being undressed. They would pull hairs off my mustache, or my chin, or my arms. But the worst weapon psychologically they used against me was the fact that my father was dying. The culture we were brought up in, we're supposed to respect our parents. When my father calls me up and says "Sami, I am dying, and I have to see you"—that means very much to us. It is very difficult for him to understand why I did not arrive. He was waiting for me. And they would constantly call up the hospital. At one time they would say "Your father died." At one time they would say "He has one more day to live, so you better sign the paper."

Q: What were the circumstances under which you signed your statements?

A: I signed two statements, one in English, and one in Hebrew. The first statement was seven pages, and that was taken Monday evening about 7 or 8 o'clock. I was nearly a complete wreck at that point. I would be screaming at times, and crying, and moaning. And, in the end, I decided to say things to let them leave me. I added things to satisfy them that never took place, like saying that I sold the magazine, which I did not do, that I contributed money to Palestine, and that there was a person there [on the Michigan State University campus] from the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine]—I never talked to that person—but they showed me a picture, and I said it could have been. So I signed those seven pages which would not have been incriminating to me, an American.

Then they came back at 12 midnight, and from 12 to 3 they kept at me the same way. At that point I just went crazy. I started crying and screaming. I finally told them, "Okay, just leave me alone. What do you want me to write? Then I was literally dictated a statement that was added to my previous declaration: I was recruited by such and such, and my code name was such and such, and I did learn how to mantle and dismantle explosives and rifles. These were the last two pages.

The next day—I was promised to be sent home after saying that statement—they came in the afternoon to

sign the Hebrew statement. I thought the man was coming to take me home, because he was a policeman, but dressed in civilian clothes. They said, "This man has come to take you home."

They put my suitcase on the table, gave me my wallet, put my passport on the table, put the money on the table I had, and said, "Okay." Then I sat down. There was one Shin Beth interrogator who started dictating essentially what was, with modifications, in the English statement. For example, I found out later that he added things, that I was an electronic explosives expert, and various other things which could incriminate me more, and which actually contradicted my earlier statement. For this reason it was not admitted as such into court, although they did use things that were in it against me.

Q: Was Israel's claim to extraterritorial jurisdiction over you ever discussed with you by the American Government representatives in Israel or by the Israeli authorities themselves?

A: With respect to the U.S. representative who visited me, this was never mentioned at all. With respect to the Israelis, the Shin Beth, they made it quite clear that there is no democracy there. In court, when Dr. Barr [Robert Barr, professor of electrical engineering at MSU] tried to speak about international law, the judge stopped him because he did not want this to come out in public. But, in the judge's sentence convicting me, there is a very clear reference to the fact that I was given a sentence to set me as an example and a deterrent for all those who would dare to speak up against Israel, whether in Israel or abroad.

Q: After your conviction, you said that your only crime was your political solidarity with the oppressed and homeless Palestinian people and other oppressed people throughout the world. How did you express this political solidarity in the past, particularly at Michigan State University?

A: I told the court I would continue to speak up as long as oppression continues to exist, whether it's in Palestine, or in Africa, or what happened to the Indians, or what is going on in Iran. Looking at the great role the U.S. has in these affairs, I think that even on campus we continuously have to make students more aware and try to force the United States to change many of its positions.

Q: Why did you go to Libya in the summer of 1976?

A: The Arab Socialist Liberal Party of Libya has a program whereby they try to attract intellectuals to come to live and work in Libya, especially Arab-Americans or European Arabs who have some background in the Arab world. They invite the students to come and look at Libya, to look at the life, to look at the culture, to see if in the future there would be a possibility to live and work there. Many people like to label Libya a terrorist country and make it look as though it's a crime to go to Libya. And this is one thing we have to speak up against. Not that I consider the Libyan Government the best type of government, but my belief is that people have the right to know what is going on in Libya and then, on the basis of these facts, to make their own judgments. Even Billy Carter went to Libya recently.

Q: Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota has accused the FBI of "throwing you to the wolves." And Congressman Robert Carr of Michigan has suggested that the FBI may have turned its information on you over to Israel. Would you comment?

A: The FBI did visit me November 4,

1976, and did question me about my trip to Libya. I told them the objectives of my visit; I told them I did participate in political rallies; and I did answer their questions. When I went to Israel, the Shin Beth told me, "We have been waiting for you."

Ever since I left the States, it was obvious that they had prior knowledge that I was arriving. When I stepped off the plane—they usually separate Arab and Eastern-type people on one side—I even passed with the Western people, but then the security person came out and pulled me from those people. So they actually knew who I was to be able to come out and separate me like this.

And, while I was in Israel, I was told time and again that the United States Government was in on it. "They don't want you in the States. You keep running around speaking too much and we're going to punish you." Once the Shin Beth interrogator—his code name was Sami—picked up a file and he was looking at it reading in English, and the file was maybe 120 or 130 pages, and he said, "This is from the FBI." He read the date on it; the date said April 19, 1977. He showed me the title; he

showed me the words "FBI." He wanted to convince me beyond any doubt that the FBI wants me out of the way. He was looking and opening pages and saying, "What do you know about Cleveland?" He'd turn a page and look at Youngstown, then he'd mention San Francisco. So the file was not just on me. When he came to Lansing, he'd laugh and he'd say, "Oh, Sami, we know you've been in a lot of activities for the Palestinians and you speak at rallies and you were in the last Independence Day Demonstration against Israel."

So they have the file. I actually saw it. I saw the date, and it's quite obvious that the FBI does transmit information to foreign intelligence agencies, whose governments then use this information to prosecute Americans. I can only say that this is a tragedy.

Q: How much assistance did you receive from the U.S. State Department?

A: When the American vice consul, Mr. Mark Davison, came the fifth day, I told him these people are trying to force me to say untrue things. He said, "I'm sorry, Sami. It's not my business whether you're innocent or guilty of the charges. This is not what I'm here for. I cannot interfere in these things." When I told him that I was taken to court after forty-eight hours, and that I didn't even understand exactly what the charges were, he was about to tell me the official charges set up against me, when his Israeli assistant, Mr. Weiss, told him not to do so. He listened to his Israeli assistant. He was going to tell me, but Mr. Weiss said not to tell him. Things like this really confuse you, because you do not know who is running the United States consulate. And this has a terrible psychological effect on you.

Later on, when I complained about physical mistreatment in the prison and their not moving me to the foreign section, the position of the United States consul was that we cannot interfere in the internal affairs of a foreign government, and what they want to do with you is their business. Even when I complained about work—they had me working in a place that produced folders and binders for the army and police and I didn't feel too good about doing that, even though I worked in it for a month—I asked to be transferred to a different type of job, and the consul, Mr. Kerr [James Kerr, chief of consular section, U.S. Embassy, Tel-Aviv], said if they asked me to make bullets

that I should make bullets. He retracted that statement two weeks after.

Still they did give some assistance. I think it was because of them that I was allowed to attend my father's funeral. That was through Felicia [Langer, Sami's Israeli defense attorney] putting pressure on the U.S. consulate which, in turn, put some pressure on the Israelis to have me attend the funeral.

Q: What do you know from your personal experiences of the estimated 3,000 or so Palestinian prisoners and detainees now in Israeli prisons?

A: The second prison I was in, Kfar Yona, was a stop for prisoners who were moving from jail to jail. And as I hear it, the conditions of their prisons are pretty bad. They're locked up twenty-three hours a day in overcrowded rooms. Medical conditions are very, very bad; they usually treat a person after it is too late. In my own case, I tried for a week to see a doctor about the inflammation of my arm, and the nurse wouldn't even listen. And then when I went to court, I just took my hand out in court and it did not look nice. It was gross, and even the prosecutor herself agreed that I should go to a hospital immediately. Imagine if I wasn't a U.S. citizen, what would happen!

I saw people who should have been in hospitals, yet they're thrown in prison. I have the name of Mohammed Zahi Balawi; he's a 19- or 20-year-old Druze from Jenin. This man suffered five broken ribs in a sixty-five-day interrogation period. I think his ribs were broken after the fifth or sixth day. They used to have him on drugs in order to force him to speak. I think his charges were minor political charges. He got sentenced for one year. I managed to see this person probably in April or sometime around then and he still couldn't walk by himself. He needed two people to lean on while he walked. He could not go to the bathroom by himself. He was unable to take showers at all. He always had to be sitting or lying down. People had to bring him his food. This is eleven months after his ribs were broken. Anyone with basic humane feelings would send this person to a hospital. But they throw him in jail, and no one finds out about it. That's what happens to most Palestinians but no one hears of it.

The Red Cross is very well aware of these conditions. They know that torture does exist. They try to do their

best, but they're under an agreement with Israel [and all other governments] not to reveal publicly what they see in exchange for permission to enter the prisons. I don't know how long they'll be able to maintain this silence.

Q: Judge Levine said that he wanted to impose a substantial sentence on you to teach you to separate your political ideals from enemy activity and to discourage others outside Israel from joining organizations unacceptable to Israel. What effect do you think your imprisonment will have?

A: I think the Zionists would agree that the arrest, imprisonment and torture had the exact opposite effect that they wanted to have on people. In occupied Palestine, prison doesn't scare people anymore. In the United States, the Israelis were very upset and embarrassed by the number of Americans, let alone Arab-Americans, who stood by me. In my school there were many professors and even many Jewish people who stood by my side. So, if they think that through scare and imprisonment they can instill fear in people, they have not succeeded. They have only made people much stronger. In my own case, I will continue to speak against oppression.

Q: How do you assess the role of your defense attorney, Felicia Langer?

A: I consider Felicia Langer as a mother to me. I could see in her face that she was holding me as a child for ten months. She suffered a lot for me. Many times her tears would just start streaking down her face when I would tell her about the things that were happening. And all the little things that she does for you. The second time she came by she brought me a towel and toothpaste and a soap bar, and later on she brought me a shirt, and, when I left, she gave the consul \$20 so I would have spending money. And all the times she would just sit down with me and give me moral support and guide me. She has been more than a mother to me. The fact that Felicia came out publicly and said that I consider Sami as my second son, and the fact that I have mutual feelings, this is the greatness in it all, as I see it, that Jews and Palestinians can come to a true understanding. My hope is that this will be like a sign of hope for the future: that there can be understanding, a real understanding between people. And I hope that our relation will be an example to help others.

Palestinians Under Occupation

Treatment of Palestinians in Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza

The Report of the 1977 National Lawyers Guild Middle East Delegation
National Lawyers Guild, New York, 1978. 143 and xv pp. \$4.50 paperback; \$12.50 hardbound.

The Israeli Government has been repeatedly charged with violating the human rights of Palestinians in territories under its control. This book analyzes those charges in a framework of international law. Its origins are as noteworthy as its contents.

In 1975 the National Lawyers Guild called upon its members to check into some of the more frequent allegations: that Israel has, among other things, illegally settled its own people on Palestinian property in the Occupied Territories; has refused to let Palestinians displaced in the 1967 fighting return to their homes; has expelled prominent Palestinians; and has imposed collective penalties on the innocent and has used torture to extract "confessions."

Studies Lead to Visitation

Concerned members undertook a systematic examination of pertinent documentation. After two years of homework, the Guild sponsored an investigative team of ten lawyers—including three women and four Jews—from across the country to make on-the-spot inquiries. In July, 1977, they went to Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza to hold interviews, make observations, acquire additional documentation, and evaluate their find-

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ings. Upon their return they reviewed available sources, including Israeli periodicals, the U.S. State Department reports, Congressional hearings, the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], Amnesty International [AI], the London *Sunday Times* field studies, the Swiss League for Human Rights and the U.N. Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

Treatment of Palestinians in Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza is the fruit of those studies and that trip, plus some supplementary 1978 data. It is the last of several successive revisions based on recommendations by a great variety of people involved in, or specializing in, the realities under consideration. Reaction was received from Israeli contacts, which resulted in clarification of several points. All facts and issues were scrutinized in Lawyers Guild seminars and debated in meetings large and small, leading up to this, the final, version.

Weighty Theme, Light Touch

Replete with hundreds of footnotes, this concise volume's approach is a legal-judicial one. Its major emphasis is on the applicability of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War—the "Fourth Geneva Convention"—internationally adopted August 12, 1949. These factors, together with the book's rather ponderous title, may turn away some potential readers interested in international fair play but unversed in the technicalities of the law. It's important, therefore, to point out that its style is engagingly readable and free of unexplained professional jargon. Here are a few of its salient observations:

The Fourth Geneva Convention, hereinafter simply "the Convention," was ratified by Israel on April 10, 1951. Its Article 49 forbids the Occupying Power to "transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occu-

pies." Instead, as the post-Camp David hassles have underscored, the Israeli Government has encouraged its own citizens to settle in the occupied areas. It has aided the settlers financially, protected their incursions militarily and abetted their takeover of Palestinian properties. All this, as Cabinet Minister Moshe Kol expressed it, is to help enlarge "the future map of Israel."

Article 49 also prohibits "individual or mass forcible transfers ... regardless of motive." Yet in the Gaza Strip, Israeli authorities have systematically destroyed homes and used other methods to "thin out the population" [Gen. Gazit's euphemism]. Israeli publicity insists that evicted Palestinians are offered alternative housing at a modest \$4500 per unit. True, but uprooted families can't even meet the \$2700 downpayment with the \$800 the government offers in compensation for each residence it demolishes. Getting re-started in a new setting is, in any case, economically hazardous, often involving loss of U.N. (UNRWA) welfare services.

Article 4 of the Convention defines the people to whom the Convention applies. It is generally interpreted as entitling people who have fled their homeland at a time of invasion to come home to stay. Some Palestinians from abroad have, indeed, been given short-term visitation privileges. However, Moshe Dayan has insisted, "Israel will not permit the [permanent] return of the hundreds of thousands of West Bank residents who left the country before and during the Six Day War."

Varieties of Israeli Opinion

Before going into the applicability of other Convention articles to the Israeli occupation, we should record the persistent efforts of the Guild team to discover and present the Occupying Power's justification of its behavior. They taped, for instance, an interview with Cabinet Secretary Aryeh Naor in which he told them, "it would be an act of anti-Semitism to say that a Jew could not settle in Judaea and Samaria" [the ancient names for parts of the West Bank]. They also quote him as saying, "Israel cannot be deemed to annex that which is rightfully hers.... Jews cannot be barred from settling anywhere within their eternal pre-ordained domain."

In other interviews the American lawyers confirmed the fact that the Israeli public is far from unanimous in its backing of its government's occupation policies. The delegation met with

leaders of the Sheli Party which, on both ethical and pragmatic grounds, favors returning the Occupied Territories to the Palestinians in the context of a general peace agreement. Mapam [Zionist-Socialist] leaders told them of their opposition to the settlements. From representatives of the non-Zionist Left they heard insistence on the Palestinian's right of self-determination. Contacts with Israeli lawyers [like Lea Tzemel] who make personal sacrifices and risk harassment and defamation to defend Palestinian clients were sobering and rewarding. Other conversations further shattered any preconceptions of a monolithic Israeli public opinion.

Such perspectives, interwoven through the entire volume, give it a stereotype-destroying liveliness, which is one of its most refreshing qualities. These alone are worth the purchase price. Space limitations, however, require concentration here on the book's unique contribution to popular print: its delineation of the pertinent Convention articles in relation to the violations of which the Israeli Government stands accused. Please remember that its illustrative material accompanying each cited article is rich in human interest, sometimes dramatically so, and should be read to flesh out the bare-bones condensations below.

Geneva Convention Defied

Article 54 states, "The Occupying Power may not alter the status of public officials ... in the occupied territories." Yet Israel has undermined the authority of mayors, especially those favoring the Palestine Liberation Organization, making citizens deal directly instead with the Israeli military governors on even such routine matters as transport licenses and building permits. It has also taken school administration, utilities development and major taxing powers over from the city councils.

Says Article 57: "The Occupying Power may requisition civilian hospitals only temporarily and only in cases of urgent necessity for the care of military wounded and sick, and ... the needs of the civilian population." This has not deterred the Israeli Government from converting three hospitals into military police stations. Other Palestinian hospitals, though unconfiscated, still have their problems. Unlike comparable Israeli institutions, they must pay taxes and high customs duties when buying new equipment. Palestinian doctors being trained abroad are not allowed to return to serve in the understaffed hos-

pitals at home. Nor is the Red Crescent [Palestinian "Red Cross"] permitted to raise funds or make normal drug purchases. Palestinian educational and social welfare agencies also suffer restrictions.

Under Article 33, "no protected person" [the Convention's standard phrase for "citizen of an occupied territory"] "may be punished for an offense he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties, ... intimidation or ... reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited." Article 53 further forbids "any destruction ... of real or personal property belonging to ... private persons, or ... public authorities, or ... cooperative organizations ... except where ... rendered absolutely necessary by military operations." In the eyes of the ICRC, Israel violates both these articles when it demolishes or seals up the homes or businesses of suspects, their relatives and neighbors without formal charges, trial, adequate warning or indemnity. In three cases whole villages were leveled. Prolonged curfews on entire communities frequently lead to untended fields and livestock deaths.

Among numerous other forms of collective punishment resorted to in reprisal against strikes and anti-occupation demonstrations is the closing of schools and teacher-training colleges for weeks at a time. This despite Article 50's insistence that "the Occupying Power shall ... facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children."

Inhumane Practices

"Protected persons ... shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity." These generalizations from Article 27 have some bearing on most of the articles noted above. They relate more fully to those that follow.

Article 49's many provisions, some already quoted, include the prohibiting of "deportations ... regardless of their motive." Even so, hundreds of Palestinian mayors, religious and labor leaders, school principals, teachers, heads of women's societies, student leaders, doctors, judges, lawyers, journalists and writers have been deported by Occupation authorities. The Guild team, like the U.S. State Department, ICRC, U.N. Commission on Human Rights and many Israeli protesters, regards these expulsions as also violating Article

68's insistence that, even for security offenses, "internment or imprisonment shall ... be the only measure for depriving protected persons of liberty." It also sees the exilings as having been "used by the Israeli Government to deprive West Bank and Gaza Palestinians of their indigenous established leadership."

Article 78 debarbs internment or house arrest [detention without trial] except "for imperative reasons of security" and then only through the first year after the "general close of military operations." Israeli authorities not only intern persons against whom evidence is too weak to sustain a criminal charge. They also, by not informing detainees of the grounds for suspicion, effectively deny the right of appeal that Article 78 insists upon.

Of Trials and Prisons

The Guild lawyers have a natural professional concern for procedural rights in connection with trials, as asserted by Articles 64, 66, 71, 73 and 76. They therefore deplore the fact that in Israel "trials are sometimes not open to the families of defendants, let alone to the public or the press. In a number of cases attorneys have had gag orders placed against them, which make it illegal for them to discuss the cases under threat of severe penalties...."

"Palestinians arrested in the West Bank and Gaza for security offenses do not have the right to see an attorney during the period of their interrogation. The twenty-one day period during which the authorities may deny counsel can be extended indefinitely."

These latter practices further violate Article 72's provision that suspects "shall have the right to be assisted by a qualified advocate or counsel of their own choice, who shall be able to visit them freely and shall enjoy the necessary facilities for preparing the defense." The fact that, according to one Israeli lawyer, "charges against a suspect are not always revealed before the day of the trial [makes] preparation by counsel extremely difficult."

Prisoners, says Article 76, "shall enjoy conditions of food and hygiene which will be sufficient to keep them in good health.... They shall receive the medical attention required by their state of health." Barred from access to Israeli prisons, the Guild lawyers quote disconcertingly vivid descriptions of wretched, unhealthy conditions from Hebrew-language Israeli journals.

The whole question of Israeli torture of Palestinians is fraught with emotion.

Article 31 debars “physical or moral coercion ... against protected persons, in particular to obtain information from them or from third parties.” Article 32 further proscribes “any other measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents.” Have the Israeli police, military and intelligence interrogators actually and as a matter of policy violated these articles? This is the inescapable implication of several reports from highly respected sources quoted by the Guild lawyers.

Questions of Torture

A 1970 Amnesty International statement on Israel declared, “We have ... extensive material to support the assumption that torture does in fact occur. ... We have rarely—if ever—had such reliable material on which to base the establishment of ... torture taking place—or not taking place—in a particular country.” Since then, AI has not been admitted to Israel or the Occupied Territories. Its repeated requests that Israel conduct an investigation in cooperation with an international representative have gone unanswered.

The ICRC is in a somewhat better position to report, but it, too, is handicapped in providing an over-all evaluation. Article 76 gives detainees “the right to be visited by ... the Red Cross.” As early as 1968, such visitations at Nablus Prison led to an ICRC account of the specifics of torture there. For years, however, Israel has prevented Red Cross delegates from seeing defendants during interrogation. Since 1970, prisoners have been forbidden to complain to the ICRC without first complaining to the military authorities. Also, while ICRC has a limited access to prisons, it is excluded entirely from interrogation centers of police stations and military camps where most of the torture allegedly occurs. In spite of these obstacles, more than 200 complaints of torture have been filed with the ICRC in Israel.

The most telling analysis of the subject is the exhaustive five-month Insight Team investigation published in the London *Sunday Times* of June 19, 1977. It concluded that torture does occur in at least six Israeli centers and has three aims: to extract information, to induce people to confess to crimes of which they may or may not be guilty and to persuade Palestinian residents to be passive. “Torture,” the report stated, “is organized so methodically that it cannot be dismissed as a handful of ‘rogue cops’ exceeding orders.” All of

Israel’s security services—including those that report to the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Police and the Prime Minister himself—are implicated. The *Sunday Times* printed in full the Israeli protest to these disclosures, but rebutted all its charges of misrepresentation.

The Guild lawyers interviewed several Palestinians who claimed to have been tortured by both primitive and sophisticated methods. They examined their scars, questioned their attorneys, checked their reputations and compared their stories with information from independent sources. They also met with Mordecai Bentov, former Israeli Minister of Housing Development, and Moshe Amar, a Mapam member of Knesset [Parliament], who substantiated many of the allegations, but were convinced that torture was rarely resorted to except when necessary. They cite Attorney Felicia Langer as stating that judges never believe torture has been used, even when marks of ill-treatment are plainly visible on the bodies of the accused.

“Since torture typically occurs in the presence of only the victim, the perpetrator and accomplices,” says the Guild report, “it is difficult to prove.” Nonetheless it feels it has gathered substantial evidence that Israel does use torture as one method of intimidating the population into leaving the occupied areas. It will doubtless continue to believe so until some unrestricted, responsible international investigation comes up with evidence to the contrary. Such an investigation, frequently asked for but so far refused by the Israeli Government, could clear up a lot of other doubts as well.

Reviewed by L. Humphrey Walz

Reviewer’s Note

American readers who judge only by what reaches them through the media may conclude that the practices described in the Guild report are exceptional rather than typical. Private correspondence from both Jews and Gentiles who inhabit or frequent the Occupied Territories, however, tends to confirm the Guild team’s judgments. Here is a paragraph from a recent letter. Names in the following account have been changed:

“I’ve been plodding through *Gulag Archipelago* in English. Solzhenitsyn’s descriptions of what the Russian Government does to people it doesn’t like have their parallels here. After midnight of 23 September, (Israeli) soldiers invaded Hanna’s family’s apartment

and demanded to take 19-year-old Maryam with them. Her parents have hired a lawyer who has repeatedly tried to see Maryam but the prison authorities refuse, saying they haven’t finished questioning her. One day an unusual thing happened. A woman from the prison staff called Maryam’s father and told him the family could visit her. So her sister, brothers, father and mother took off from school and work and went to see her. When they got to the prison, they were told this was impossible and that the woman who made the call would be punished. The mother fainted and the father pled with them so earnestly that they finally gave them 5 minutes to see her. She looked through a window at her siblings and the whole family is more horrified than before. Seeing her has confirmed all their fears of what is happening to her. When we visit the family we find them crying. They don’t know what to do to get her out as any ‘resistance’ to the authorities is considered ‘pro-PLO’ and could add years to her imprisonment.”

Note the tenacious lawyer and the sympathetic woman from the prison staff. They are among tens of thousands of Israeli Jews who are becoming more active in counteracting their government’s occupation policies. It is hard to believe that the groceryman described next could have gotten out of jail in barely five weeks without help from such people.

“Last Sunday Yussuf, the 55-year-old greengrocer, appeared in church again. He had recently been released after thirty-four days in prison. He seemed about half his former weight and had many lumps and bruises. The family said it had taken him two days after his discharge to get oriented enough to be able to talk coherently. He has arthritis but was, he says, made to stand on one leg for twenty-four hours. He slept on the floor with four others in a cell for one person. The only water was in an inadequate toilet. He was hung up by his hands against the wall one night because he snored. He was repeatedly questioned and beaten. Why? A while ago a deaf old Arab who looked half sick and claimed his family was in great need asked Yussuf for some money. He didn’t give him any right away but after several requests he finally felt the man really needed it so he gave him some. The military police arrested him. They made no formal charge, but claimed that the man was a PLO representative, so Yussuf was supporting the PLO.”

Books

Christians in the Arab East

A Political Study.

By Robert B. Betts. *Lycabettus Press, Athens. 1975. 293 pp.*

Reprinted from *Theological Review*, I, 1, 1978, Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon.

Robert B. Betts, an American and a layman in the Protestant Episcopal Church, holds a doctoral degree from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Betts' acquaintance with the Middle East began with a junior-year-abroad in 1960. After a year as Research Analyst in Arabic at the Library of Congress in 1967, he served briefly as a foreign service officer in Kuwait. Since 1969 he has lived in Athens where he lectures in European and Middle East History at Athens College and for the European Division of the University of Maryland.

In his newly-published book, *Christians in the Arab East*, Betts combines substantial scholarship with a very lucid style of writing. The book is an outstanding piece of work, worthy of much lengthier comment than the space limitations of this review will permit.

Section I, "A History of Christianity Among the Arabs and Arabized Peoples of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent," is a survey from pre-Islamic times to the emergence of independent states in 1946. This is perhaps the least adequate part of the book because of its brevity, yet it contains much useful information. There are some typographical errors, such as the reference on p. 6 to a Council of Ephesus in 681 (it was the Council of Constantinople) and a possibly unwarranted generalization in placing major blame for the success of the Islamic invasions on the lack of unity within the Church. Nevertheless, it takes a great deal of skill to summarize the record of fifteen or sixteen centuries in such brief compass, and Betts has done it well.

Section II, "The Religious Demography of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent," consists first of concise descriptions of Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Jacobite, Syrian Catholic, Maronite, Coptic Orthodox, Coptic Catholic, Nestorian, Chaldean, Armenian, Latin and Protestant communities. It then moves into a more detailed country-by-country analysis of religious demography.

This reviewer has also attempted statistical estimates of the Christian communities in the Middle East and fully appreciates the problems involved in so formidable a task. Trustworthy and up-to-date statistics are simply unavailable because the Eastern Churches do not keep records in the western manner. One is always caught between the often exaggerated estimates born of wishful thinking on the part of some church leaders on the one hand, and on the other hand, the tendency of non-Christian governments to minimize the numerical strength of Christians in official publications. I would note that Betts' estimates are consistently lower than mine, except for his reference to the Maronites and one or two other communities. I am reasonably sure that the total he gives for Coptic Orthodox membership (2½-3 millions) is much too low. Yet he stoutly defends the now much-disputed thesis that "of the present population of Lebanon ... almost certainly half are Christian."

This section of the book is very good in general, although there are again some minor inaccuracies (such as referring to Nestorian doctrine as "in essence Arianism," and locating the residence of the Nestorian Patriarch in Chicago rather than in San Francisco where he actually resides).

Section III on "Christians in the Present-day Social Structure of the Arab East" is, in the reviewer's judgment, superb. The tensions between a sense of identity with their respective ethnic communities and their Arab identity are skillfully analyzed. The major role of Christians throughout the region in such fields as education, journalism, finance, and the social evolution of women is well-documented. Any reader who has been of the erroneous opinion that the Christian minorities of the Middle East are insignificant or uninfluential in the wider social order will find here convincing evidence to the contrary.

Section IV, "Politics and Christianity in the Arab East," is clearly the most important contribution of this book. The author distinguishes between the political involvement of the hierarchies, whose concerns are primarily for the welfare of the Church establishment, and that of individual Christian politicians who may or may not serve specific interests of the Churches as such. His analyses of Christians in secular political life, their role in the Arab renaissance, and especially that of Christian Arabs and the Palestine conflict, contain a remarkable variety of

information. Certain of Betts' interpretations are controversial and will undoubtedly be challenged by some Christians and non-Christians alike, but no one will regard them as either ambiguous or pedantic.

A somewhat disproportionate number of pages in this section is devoted to Lebanon, although it must be acknowledged that the Lebanese political situation is more complex than elsewhere in the region and that Christian involvement is more pervasive. The background information given is especially useful to one who is trying to understand the current political struggle in that troubled country. However, Betts' contention that stability ultimately rests on cooperation between the Maronites and the Sunni Muslims seems an oversimplification.

Section V, "Evaluation and Future Assessment," finds hopeful signs in the relaxation of once-rigid communal distinctions. Improved Muslim-Christian relationships have been fostered, says the author, by their wider associations in educational institutions, a growing tendency to stress their common heritage in Abraham, the Arabic language which they share, and a more ecumenical mentality illustrated in the Vatican's current emphasis on more creative Christian-Muslim dialogue. Warnings are given, however, about the survival of prejudice and the difficulty of achieving true integration and equality. Much depends, he says, on what happens in Lebanon: "The success or failure of the Lebanese Christian communities in perpetuating and perfecting this society (of creative co-existence) will irrevocably be shared by all Arabic-speaking Christians throughout the Middle East, and will in large part determine the outcome of their centuries-old striving to achieve a truly integrated and egalitarian Arab nation."

An Appendix cites official Christian-Muslim population figures at the most important centers in a wide arc from Aswan in Upper Egypt to Basra on the Gulf. "Official" figures, as I stated above, usually suffer from a tendency on the part of Muslim governments to understate the numerical strength of Christian communities. A further weakness here is that none of the statistics given are later than 1964, and some are as old as 1956.

Following the extensive section of footnotes and documentation, there are almost twenty-five pages of especially useful bibliography.

Reviewed by Norman A. Horner

Books To Order

R. Afifi, A. Al-Qazzaz & A. Shabbas, **The Arab World: A Handbook for Teachers**, Najda, Albany, Calif. 128 pp. \$5.00 (paperback). A book of interest not only to teachers but to all having an interest in the Arab world. The authors offer it as an antidote to the prevalence of distortions, stereotyping, etc., found in most school texts covering the Arabs, their culture, history and society. Our price, \$3.25.

Robert B. Betts, **Christians in the Arab East**, rev. 1978, John Knox. 318 pp. \$12.00. A comprehensive study of the Arabic-speaking Christians and the role they have played in the Middle East from the time of the Islamic conquest up to present day developments. Valuable demographic statistics and a comprehensive bibliography included. Our price, \$7.65.

Odd Bull, **War and Peace in the Middle East**, Leo Cooper, London. 205 pp. \$15.00. A noteworthy account of U.N. peace-keeping force activities from 1963 to 1970. Impartial factual reporting of various Israeli/Arab encounters. Includes photos and documentary appendices. Our price, \$9.85.

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Peggy Duff, ed., **War or Peace in the Middle East?**, Spokesman Books (London). 202 pp. 1.95 pounds (paperback). A collection of essays by seven different authors, emphasizing that at the core of the Middle East problem lies the struggle of Palestinians for self-determination, and offering the solution: an independent Palestinian state. Our price, \$3.00.

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Who is Menahem Begin?, Inst. for Palestine Studies, ed. and publisher. 61 pp. \$2.00 (paperback). A compilation of Begin's own statements vis-a-vis terrorist activities of the Irgun and Haganah before and during the creation of Israel in 1948. Various speeches and interviews since then. Short biographical sketch. Our price, \$1.45.

Peter Mansfield, **The Arab World** (title of British edition, "The Arabs"), T. Y. Crowell. 572 pp. \$16.95. A very readable history of the Arabs from pre-Islamic times to the present, with an objective account of the establishment of the State of Israel and the resultant effect on the attitudes of the Arabs. Our price, \$10.00.

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